

Although I do not yet own a digital TV, I am troubled about talk of the "broadcast flag." Currently I can record a favorite program for archiving, ask a fellow fan to tape something I can't receive, share a series or movie with a friend who may not be familiar with it (and thereby, perhaps, increase its audience, which is something the Powers That Be should want to encourage), or simply time-switch a program I'm not sure I want to keep in my permanent collection. I have never abused these freedoms which are permitted me under the "fair use" doctrine, nor do most fans I know of. It is unfair and unAmerican to penalize all of us because Hollywood believes a few rotten apples are misusing their privileges.

Technology being what it is, even if the flag is put into effect it will not prevent piracy. The truly dedicated and tech-savvy pirate will always find a way around whatever countermeasures may be enacted. Have our lawmakers learned nothing from the failure of Prohibition or (more recently) the "war on drugs" or the attempt to regulate spam and porn sites? The concentration should not be on blanket prevention, which prosecutes lawbreaker and law-abiding viewer alike, but on finding and punishing those persons who break the law.

As long as a person is taping a broadcast for personal use only, or (if sharing it) is charging only enough to cover his costs, I cannot see what Hollywood is troubled about. Increased exposure of \*any\* broadcast event can only be \*good\* for the production community--and the advertisers who finance TV as we know it. Keep in mind that the "Star Trek" franchise would not exist were it not for the dedicated fans who kept the series alive for over a decade until the first movie was made.

I urge you to require Hollywood to provide proof that its proposed technologies will continue to allow for all legal uses. If they cannot, the broadcast flag should be rejected out of hand.